

# JOHN LEE HOOKER

MORE  
REAL  
FOLK  
BLUES

THE MISSING ALBUM



CHD-9329

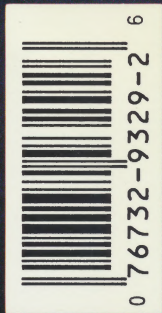
1. **THIS LAND IS NOBODY'S LAND** 4:31
2. **DEEP BLUE SEA** 3:35
3. **NOBODY KNOWS** 4:24
4. **MUSTANG SALLY & GTO** 4:38
5. **LEAD ME** 4:44
6. **CATFISH** 7:25
7. **I CAN'T QUIT YOU BABY** 3:27
8. **WANT AD BLUES** 6:09
9. **HOUSE RENT BLUES** 3:49

All tracks previously unreleased



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**M**usicologists like to draw the distinction between “internally referenced” and “externally referenced” music. There’s a blurred line between the two, but “internally referenced” music is supposed to come from within the performer without deference to the marketplace or even musical norms. Most performers like to think that their music is internally referenced; in truth, it’s a rare distinction.

When John Lee Hooker announced his arrival in 1949 with “Boogie Chillen,” it was obvious that here was a performer whose music came from deep within himself. It was brooding, intense, modal – and quite unlike anything else in the history of the blues. Hooker used the electric guitar, but he wasn’t a modern bluesman. He often sang like he was changing chords, but rarely did. He also forsook the standard 12-bar a-a-b blues construction in favor of rambling, discursive verses that might be any length – and might or might not rhyme.

Hooker was, and still is, an elusive – even evasive – person. Even his birthdate has been variously quoted as August 22, 1915, 1917 and 1920. The most oft-quoted date, 1917, is probably false; Hooker says that he gave his brother’s year of birth so

that he could get into the Army. Why? Because “the uniform was so great with the women.”

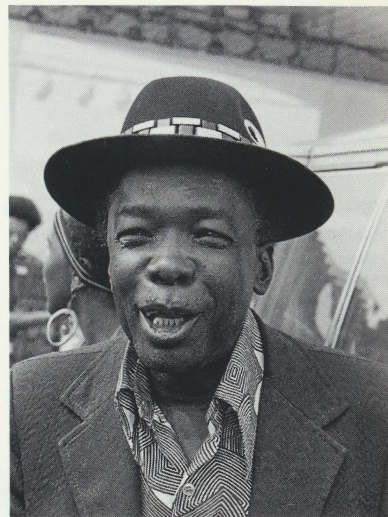
Hooker was brought up in Clarksdale, Mississippi by his mother and step-father, Willie Moore. By Hooker’s account, Moore was a talented musician and he remembers blues legends like Charley Patton and Blind Lemon Jefferson visiting the house. When he was 14, Hooker took his few belongings to Memphis to live with his aunt. He worked as an usher in the theaters that lined Beale Street before moving in with another aunt in Cincinnati. He stayed there for seven or eight years, holding down a factory job during the worst of the Depression.

In 1943, Hooker moved to Detroit, the city he would call home until 1970. It was there that he was discovered, and made his first recordings in 1948. “Boogie Chillen,” cut in October of that year, became a giant hit early in 1949. Just as black music seemed to be heading uptown at a steady clip, Hooker took it back almost beyond the plantation.

We catch him here in 1966. The folk music boom of the late ‘50s and early ‘60s had stimulated interest in what became known as “real folk blues” – in order to

distinguish it from the dreadful commercial kind (never mind that “folk blues” was the commercial black music of its day). Even established bluesmen, like Muddy Waters, were forced to go buy an acoustic guitar and dust off forgotten memories and songs. Hooker, for whom the electric instrument might almost have been invented, fell into line and cut some sessions that lacked electricity in every conceivable sense. In a strange parallel development, though, his pop-slanted mid-’50s Vee Jay recordings were becoming very successful in England. Across the water, he was on network television singing “Dimples” and “Boom Boom” while he was playing Gerde’s Folk City back home.

By 1966, Hooker’s grand tour of the record labels brought him back to Chess for whom he had recorded in 1951 and 1952. The producer was Ralph Bass, who had been recording black music commercially since the mid-’40s for a variety of labels (most successfully for King, for whom he discovered James Brown). Bass cut two albums’ worth of John Lee Hooker; the first, The Real Folk Blues, was issued in October, 1966. This, the second album, was sequenced, mastered and titled – but never issued.



The first thing to become obvious, of course, is that this isn’t folk blues. It’s John Lee Hooker – rambling, introspective, alternately menacing and tender...and mercifully plugged in. Many of his songs seem to come from some private geography of the soul; the lead cut, “This Land Is Nobody’s Land,” is a case in point. Is he talking about Vietnam or the United States? This, one of Hooker’s first oblique stabs at



social awareness, presages the haunting "Motor City Is Burning" cut a few years later.

The full group comes out for "Deep Blue Sea." Arguably, John Lee Hooker was at his best when his primary accompaniment was his guitar and his foot, but when times changed and he fronted a band, he became an accompanist's nightmare. A sympathetic group and some rehearsal could yield excellent results, but the wrong group on the wrong day could destroy the essence of

his music. At times here, Hooker and his band seem at cross-purposes, but he compensates with rare vocal form: urgent, intense, jumping from basso-profundo to falsetto shrieks.

"Nobody Knows" is Hooker's answer to all the earnest young white journalists who came (and still come) to him with notebook in hand, asking "John Lee..er.. what is it to have the blues?"

In "Mustang and GTO" Hooker makes reference to "Mustang Sally" – but not the

STEREO-MONO MASTER

audiotape--182

John Lee Hooker  
-- Side 1 (#14975)

	1	2	3	4	5
1	This Land is Nobodys' Land	14769	4:30		
2	Deep Blue Sea	14772	3:25		
3	Nobody Knows	14767	4:10		
4	Mustang & GTO	14776	4:38		
5	Lead Me	14775	4:25		
			21:28		

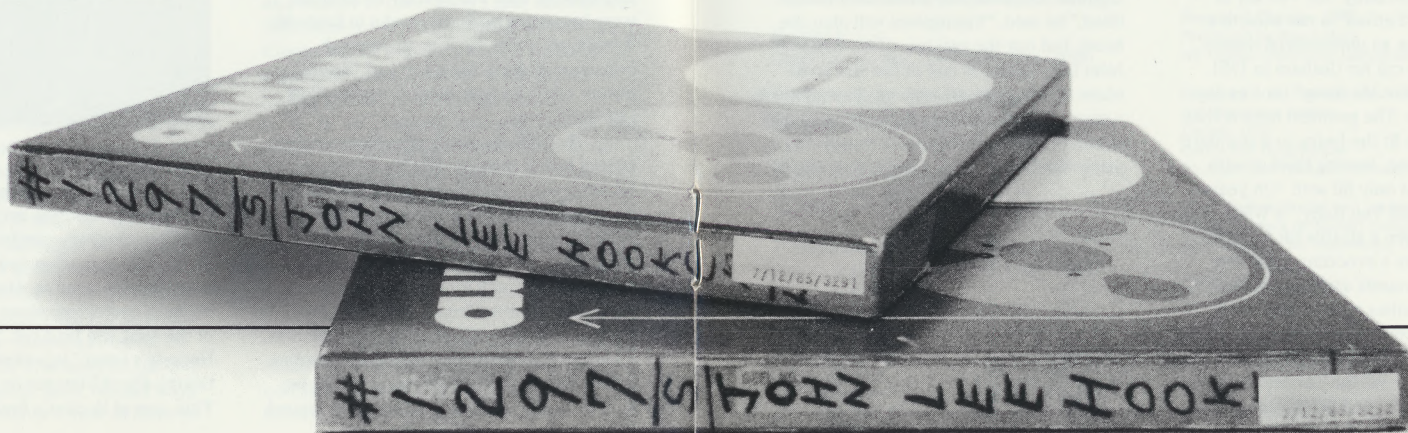
Use 1.1 For Mono

STEREO-MONO MASTER

audiotape--282

John Lee Hooker  
-- Side 2 (#14976)

	1	2	3	4
1	Cat Fish	14769	2:23	
2	Can't Quit You Baby	14773	3:25	
3	What A Blues	14777	4:08	
4	House Bent Blues	14778	3:25	
			20:41	



version we all remember by Wilson Pickett, which wasn't a hit until the following year. Instead, Hooker is alluding to the original version by Mack Rice, which was only a minor hit nation-wide – but a smash in Detroit – in 1965. This was obviously a stab at Top 40, proving that John Lee Hooker was no Chuck Berry – and Berry was no John Lee Hooker, for that matter.

On "Lead Me," Hooker revisits his own turf. He had earlier cut the song as "You Can Lead Me Baby" for Vee Jay in 1957. Similarly, "Catfish" is old wine in a new bottle. It was an immemorial theme that Hooker had cut for Gotham in 1951, and recut as "Drive Me Away" for Vee Jay some years later. The problem here is that the band tries to fit the lyrics to a standard blues construction, leaving Hooker with holes that he can only fill with "Oh yeahs".

"I Can't Quit You Baby," a Willie Dixon song that had been a sizable hit for Otis Rush in 1956, gets a brooding treatment from Hooker. It stands as one of his few overt covers of other artists' hits.

John Lee returns to covering his own material with "Want Ad Blues," another song he had recorded for Vee Jay, and would record again for ABC-Bluesway the

following year. On "House Rent Blues," Hooker tackles one of his favorite themes. He had first recorded it as a one-chord boogie in 1950, and returned to it at half the tempo on "I Lost My Job" in 1961. Other variations populate the Hooker discography; this is one of the most compelling.

In an interview over twenty years ago, John Lee Hooker talked about how the blues hadn't produced any true innovators for a number of years: "Me, Muddy Waters, Lightnin' Hopkins; our shoes ain't easily filled," he said. "Youngsters will play the blues, but not the real low down blues." John Lee Hooker is one of the last great blues archetypes still with us. That alone is a cause for celebration; an entire unissued album of John Lee Hooker at or near his prime doubly so.

– Colin Escott

1. **This Land Is Nobody's Land** 4:31  
(John Lee Hooker, King Of Boogie, BMI)
2. **Deep Blue Sea** 3:35  
(John Lee Hooker, Arc Music Corp., BMI)
3. **Nobody Knows** 4:24  
(John Lee Hooker, Arc Music Corp., BMI)
4. **Mustang Sally & GTO** 4:38  
(John Lee Hooker, Arc Music Corp., BMI)
5. **Lead Me** 4:44  
(John Lee Hooker, Arc Music Corp., BMI)
6. **Catfish** 7:25  
(John Lee Hooker, Arc Music Corp., BMI)
7. **I Can't Quit You Baby** 3:27  
(Willie Dixon, Hoochie Coochie Music, BMI)
8. **Want Ad Blues** 6:09  
(John Lee Hooker, Conrad Music, a Division of Arc Music Corp., BMI)
9. **House Rent Blues** 3:49  
(John Lee Hooker, Arc Music Corp., BMI)

Personnel:

John Lee Hooker - vocal, guitar

Eddie Burns - guitar

Fred Below - drums

Lafayette Leake - piano (all tracks, except "This Land Is Nobody's Land," "Nobody Knows," and "Catfish"); organ ("Catfish" only)



Recorded Chicago, 1966  
Produced by Ralph Bass  
All Tracks Previously Unreleased.

Research and Coordination: Andy McKaie  
Art Direction: Vartan  
Design: DZN  
Cover Art: Greg Ellison  
Photos: John Gibbs Rockwood

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NOBODY'S LAND
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